

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT FRONTPAGE BYLINER DAVID BINDER
NEW YORK TIMES, MAY 3, 1974 HEADLINED "TALKS ARE BEGUN
TO LIMIT A-TESTS UNDER THE GROUND."
2. WASHINGTON, MAY 2. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAID TODAY
THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD BEGUN NEGOTIATING A TREATY FOR A PARTIAL BAN OF UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR
TESTS--A PROJECT DISCUSSED OFF AND ON SINCE 1958.
3. AT PRESENT, THE OFFICIALS SAID, THE HOPE IS TO HAVE AN
AGREEMENT READY FOR PRESIDENT NIXON AND THE SOVIET COMMUNIST
LEADER, LEONID I. BREZHNEV, TO SIGN AT THEIR MEETING IN
MOSCOW, PROBABLY AT THE END OF JUNE.
4. MEANWHILE, A HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE WAS TOLD
THAT SOVIET DELEGATES TO AN INFORMAL MEETING IN HELSINKI
HAD INDICATED A NEW FLEXIBILITY IN THE SOVIET POSITION ON
THE KEY ISSUE OF INSPECTION, WHICH HAS BEEN BLOCKING A
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PROPOSED TREATY BANNING PRODUCTION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS.

DETAILS ON PAGE 3.

5. THE ENVISIONED AGREEMENT ON UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TESTS

WAS DESCRIBED BY AN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL AS "A THRESHOLD TREATY--NOT A TOTAL BAN." HE SAID THAT UNDERGROUND TEST EXPLOSIONS UNDER A CERTAIN MAGNITUDE WOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE AFTER THE LIMITATION WENT INTO EFFECT.

6. THE OFFICIAL ADDED THAT THE BAN WOULD NOT AFFECT DETERMINATIONS DESIGNED FOR OSTENSIBLY PEACEFUL PURPOSES, SUCH AS CANAL EXCAVATION OR ATTEMPTS TO CREATE UNDERGROUND CHAMBERS FOR STORING NATURAL GAS.

7. 255 TESTS BY THE U.S. IT WAS ON AUG. 5, 1963, THAT THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES AGREED ON A TREATY OUTLAWING NUCLEAR TESTS IN THE ATMOSPHERE, IN SPACE AND UNDER WATER. SINCE THAT TIME, THE UNITED STATES HAS CONDUCTED 255 UNDERGROUND TESTS, ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION.

8. IN THE SAME PERIOD THE SOVIET UNION HAS CONDUCTED NINE UNDERGROUND TESTS OF SUCH MAGNITUDE THAT THEY WERE DETECTED ABROAD, AND THERE WERE 81 OCCASIONS ON WHICH SEISMIC SIGNALS FROM SOVIET TESTING SITES STRONGLY INDICATED NUCLEAR UNDERGROUND EXPLOSIONS.

9. THE LAST UNITED STATES TEST CONDUCTED AT THE A.E.C.'S NEVADA GROUNDS WAS ON FEB. 27 AND THE LAST DETECTED TEST IN THE SOVIET UNION OCCURRED JAN. 30 AT THE SEMIPALATINSK GROUNDS IN SIBERIA.

10. THE UNDERGROUND TESTS HAVE BEEN USED BY THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT OVER THE 11 YEARS TO PROVE ITS ENTIRE RANGE OF ATOMIC WEAPONRY, A PENTAGON OFFICIAL SAID. THESE EXTEND FROM SMALL TACTICAL NUCLEAR ARMS TO THE LARGE WARHEADS ATTACHED TO STRATEGIC MISSILES, INCLUDING THE MULTIPLE INDEPENDENTLY TARGETABLE RE-ENTRY VEHICLES CALLED MIRV'S.

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11. SPEAKING OF THE NEW NEGOTIATIONS, THE UNITED STATES OFFICIAL SAID THERE WAS "NO INDICATION HOW FAR" THE LIMITATION ON UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TESTING WOULD GO SINCE THERE WAS STILL A GOOD DEAL OF DISPUTE BY SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICIANS ON THE ABILITY TO DETECT THESE EXPLOSIONS.

12. AN OFFICIAL OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION SAID

THE "GRAY ZONE" OF DETECTABILITY RANGED FROM 2 KILOTONS TO 50 KILOTONS, DEPENDING ON THE EXPERTS ONE CONSULTED. THE HIROSHIMA ATOMIC BOMB HAD A POWER OF 20 KILOTONS, OR

THE EQUIVALENT OF 20,000 TONS OF TNT.

,3. NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PARTIAL BAN WERE SAID BY TWO OFFICIALS TO HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN LAST MONDAY BY SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER AND THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER, ANDREI A. GROMYKO, IN GENEVA.

14. A THIRD OFFICIAL SAID: "NOTHING HAS BEEN AGREED, BUT WE DON'T EXCLUDE ANYTHING." HE ADDED THAT THE PROPOSED TREATY "HASN'T PASSED THROUGH THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL YET."

15. OTHER OFFICIALS SAID THIS WOULD EXPLAIN WHY KNOWLEDGE OF THE TREATY PROPOSAL HAD NOT FILTERED DOWN IN THE BUREAUCRACY OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION.

16. EVEN A PARTIAL UNDERGROUND TEST BAN IS CERTAIN TO DRAW OPPOSITION ON CAPITOL HILL FROM LEGISLATORS SUSPICIOUS OF DETENTE MOVES, ONE OFFICIAL REMARKED, AND HE NAMED SENATOR HENRY M. JACKSON, THE WASHINGTON DEMOCRAT, AS ONE POTENTIAL ANTAGONIST.

17. A PENTAGON OFFICIAL ADDED THAT SUCH A TREATY WOULD ALSO BE VIEWED SKEPTICALLY BY THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF AND PERHAPS BY DEFENSE SECRETARY JAMES R. SCHLESINGER.

18. HOWEVER, THE PENTAGON OFFICIAL SURMISED THAT OPPONENTS OF A LIMITATION MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS
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BY THE ARGUMENT THAT SUITABLE UNDERGROUND TESTING COULD BE CONTINUED UNDER THE GUISE OF PERFORMING PEACEFUL TASKS.

19. THE SAME WOULD APPLY TO THE SOVIET UNION, THE OFFICIAL ADDED, NOTING THAT SOVIET UNDERGROUND DETONATIONS HAD BEEN MADE WITH THE AIM OF EXCAVATING CANALS FOR THE DIVERSION OF RIVERS AT TWO SITES IN 1971.

20. IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS SPENT MORE THAN \$6-BILLION ON UNDERGROUND TESTS AND OVER \$300-MILLION ON DETECTION TECHNOLOGY.

21. KENNEDY DISCUSSED BAN. THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION'S CURRENT TESTING BUDGET IS \$97-MILLION AND ITS DETECTION BUDGET IS \$8.5-MILLION. THERE ARE 4,000 PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN

THE TESTING PROGRAM IN NEVADA.

22. UNTIL RECENTLY THE UNITED STATES HAD INSISTED THAT ANY COMPREHENSIVE BAN ON UNDERGROUND TESTS WOULD REQUIRE SOME INSPECTIONS ON THE SITES OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS. BUT ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAID DETECTION TECHNOLOGY HAD ADVANCED TO THE POINT WHERE LIMITATIONS COULD BE MONITORED BY SEISMIC INSPECTION DEVICES.
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